



# NEWS RELEASE

## HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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### **Search Teams Locate Missing Woman in Good Health** *Mentally Challenged Woman Disappeared Tuesday Night*

Search and rescue workers located a missing mentally challenged woman today after a 37-hour investigation. Melanie McKinney, 34, of the 5400 block of El Camino Dr. was discovered around noon today in the stairwell of an apartment building in the 5300 block of Harpers Farm Rd. in Columbia. She was in good condition and was taken to Howard County General Hospital as a precaution for possible dehydration.

Howard County police officers and members of the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Special Operations Team began searching for McKinney after receiving a missing person report Tuesday evening. She had been last seen taking a garbage bag to the curb of her group home.

Investigators believe McKinney moved from building to building to stay warm.

Despite the frigid temperatures, approximately 35 search and rescue volunteers and 12 search dogs assisted in the investigation. The specially-trained volunteers came from numerous groups, including: Shenandoah Mountain Rescue, Potomac Valley Rescue, Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue, Piedmont Search and Rescue, Top of Virginia Search and Rescue, Chesapeake Canine Search and Rescue, Mid-Atlantic Search and Rescue Dogs, and the American Search and Rescue Dog Association.

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